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S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 000660

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2014  
TAGS: PREL ASEC FAIR PTER ABLD DJ  
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI SECURITY CHIEF SEEKS ADDED  
COUNTER-TERRORISM SUPPORT

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA D. RAGSDALE.  
REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶11. (S) Ambassador, accompanied by RAO, paid a courtesy call on Hassan Said Khaireh, Chief of National Security Services, and his Deputy, Abdillahi Mohamed Abdillahi, on May 4 at the Presidency. She began the meeting by thanking the two for their support in the global war on terrorism. She stressed the importance of continuing U.S.-Djibouti cooperation in this area, and praised the warm relations her two interlocutors had with RAO. Hassan Said thanked the Ambassador and recalled the events of September 11 and their role in enhancing this cooperation. He pledged that the relations Ambassador described would continue.

¶12. (C) Said noted ongoing efforts of his government to protect its borders and appreciated training opportunities offered through the U.S. Anti-terrorism Assistance (ATA) program. He expressed special concern, however, about the nation's ability to guard against smuggling via air routes, especially flights originating from Hargeisa in Somaliland and from Mogadishu. Said stated that the weak area was in the large volume of baggage coming into Djibouti on these flights and insufficient capacity to inspect them. He said he believed x-ray equipment could assist in this area. He explained that none of the flights which come into Djibouti or depart from Djibouti have adequate procedures for baggage examination. An x-ray exists for checking of large bags on arrival at the airport and a second x-ray for hand luggage once well inside the terminal building and just prior to movement to airport gates. He stated that another was needed to provide a closer look at luggage and other items arriving into Djibouti, especially from Somaliland and Somalia.

¶13. (C) Ambassador said she would look into the need he described and get back to him on whether assistance in this realm is possible. She told Said that she was aware that additional funds had been allocated to Djibouti for a Safe Skies program and believed that the program may include airborne safety aspects as well as ground safety aspects. Perhaps, she said, there may be a way to fold in to the Safe Skies program the equipment he described. There will be further opportunities to discuss the Safe Skies program, Ambassador said, when Abdillahi attends the Department of Transportation and Transportation Security Administration conference September 22-24 in Johannesburg as part of Djibouti's delegation.

¶14. (C) Ambassador expressed appreciation for the contributions Djibouti made to the dialogue at the recent EACTI conference in Kampala and said that she understood Djibouti had been a "star" at the conference. Abdillahi who had been one of Djibouti's four representatives there, expressed pleasure at this perception and said he found the conference very useful. He stated that Djibouti had a more critical role to play because of its direct involvement in many of the issues brought out in the conference. Ethiopia, for example, was more narrowly focused on insurgency groups such as the OLF vice true terrorist organizations.

¶15. (C) Abdillahi took the opportunity of the Ambassador's call to raise the disposition of the vacant building across the street from the Embassy. The building had been largely emptied by Security Services after September 2001, in support of security measures for Embassy Djibouti. Djibouti's government had asked the Embassy on earlier occasions if the U.S. would be interested in purchasing the building. Ambassador told Abdillahi that she would be pleased to raise the building's disposition with Washington, but that she would first require a specific proposal from the Government of Djibouti. If the proposal is for sale of the building, for example, it should include price and other particulars. She noted her concerns, however, about the condition of the building and the potential problem posed by the building having several owners. Hassan Said and Abdillahi responded that the Minister of Finance was working on such a proposal.

RAGSDALE